

Leicester, Mass. August 24/70.

Dear friend Webb;

You are very good to write to me, - I was about to say too good, & that I didn't deserve a word from you; - but that w^d be very hard on me, & unjust too, as implying that I am very much to blame for not doing my part of the correspondence, (which can never be what a corresp.^e sh^d be ^{I know} when one-sided.) But a very far greater injustice to me would be the supposition, on your part, that I do not care for or value your letters. You must never think, suppose, imagine, fancy, suspect, or conceive the possibility of, that. If I can say that stronger, tell me how, and I'll say it. (So good a "Friend" as you, - or so much of a Friend - will not want me to asseverate, much less to swear it.) In fact no letters come to this house which give so great and general a pleasure as yours always do; and I only wish you were willing and able to write to us much oftener. Every reason you ^{have} assigned for my not writing is ^{an actual} reason in the case, & has stood in the way of my writing in all directions, ^{& not Dublin alone;} - My father's death has devolved upon me many cares & duties, some of a novel sort, which have taken up a good deal of my time. We have had much Summer Company, - never, more, in the same time - and that takes up, (& cuts up,) one's time a good deal. The extraordinary heat, too, joined with an almost entire want of rain for over two months and a half, has been too much for me, and has kept me with seemingly a low fever about me much of the time. Such heat & drought as we have had - (the heat is now much abated, but the drought lasts, & is severe) - would I think be too much even for you, with all y^r. love & warmth. Instead of 70° to 80°,

which is indeed admirable - we have had few days the past 2 months when the mercury has not been at over 85° - we have had a great many when it has been 88° to 92° for 10 or 12 hours of the day; and in less elevated places, as Worcester, the towns around Boston, & the great cities, 95° , 96° , 97° , and 98° have been frequently reported from reliable weather-recorders. Common talk & newspaper paragraphs have told repeatedly of numbers up to 103° - I don't believe in more than 98° , but that I do, entirely.

In these circumstances, you may well believe the weather has been a topic; and I must ask pardon for taking up so much of my note - i.e. your time - with it.

You deserve I have only rec^d. (last evf.) yours of Aug^t. 11th. Thank you for it, and for its enclosures, Deborah's 2 pieces & the programme of the excursion to Beauparc. Thank you too for promise of Ginxibaby, whose arrival we look for. My Cousin, Rev. Fred^k. Frothingham, now with us, has seen the book, & gave us last evf., after I had read aloud your letter, an acc^t. of it. He said it w^d. make us both laugh & cry. Your letter came quick - postmark^d. "Dublin, Au 13 '70", and in my hands Aug. 23.

I was sorry to find you had not received a quite long letter which Ade wrote to you - I should have said longer ago than August 1st - and which, in such case, ought to have reached D., before yours left it.

We are glad you speak of Deborah, & of her Sister Cousins, in whose visits in the old country we feel quite an interest. How sad it seems that their Mother could never have re-visited her native country & her near kindred. I sent away your letter this noon, with D.'s 2 pieces, to Ade. who is again with her Grandmother - having been away a week & likely to be gone one or two weeks more at least.

* She might have remained at the Hotel St. House had she wished. (Father left it for her note and an ample provision for keeping it up. But she felt it better for her to give up care,

* She might have remained at the Hollis St. house had she wished; but she preferred to go and reside in a smaller house with my younger sister*. She is now more than 82 yrs. of age, and is a very feeble person. She has been far from strong for more than a year, and my father's death wore upon her greatly. She has borne the extreme heat of this summer far better than I supposed she could, and is seemingly quite as well now as at any time for a year and a half past. She is now making visits in Brookline & Dorchester, & wanted Ade. to go with her from place to place & take some care of her. Ade., like myself, has felt the great heat of the weather very much, and I think is not so well for it. The care of a great many young folks, who have been visiting us has also been rather ~~the cause of~~ ^{hard upon} her. It has been astonishing to me how they would keep it up, spite of hot weather; - croquet in full blaze of the sun; boating do. do.; a day's fishing & boating on the "New Reservoir" (4 m. off.); another day's boating & pic-nicing on Quinigamee Lake, 2 miles E. of Wore; other days spent in the woods with books & work (to more play than work); some bowling, considerable music, and occasional carriage driving, - to say nothing of visits, & evening unceremonious parties, - until I looked for some great collapse to take place; but they lived through it all, & Bepie & the most of them seem nothing the worse. The set is now considerably broken up, by departures of Sargents from one house, Denny's from another, and Mays, Whites, Pages, Davises, Earles, Goddards, Welds, & "many more names," successively, from our house. - I have myself attended 2 pic-nics in the woods, - one on the 4th July, a small party but a charming one; the other in Sargent's Grove, in honor of the large circle of Sargent visitors, about two weeks ago.

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Last summer often, & the first part of this quite often, we wished you were with us, to see how we look, live, & act in summer-time; but for 6 or 8 weeks past I think you would have thanked no one for bringing you here. We are not willing to think you are not to visit Leicester again. For ourselves, we seem to be getting more firmly planted here. Last fall I bought a piece of land adjoining me on the west - about 3/4 of an acre - being a portion of the Hershaw estate, where Mr. Mercall lived with 3 children when you were here. (I remember you took a kindly interest in some of them.) That land I am still trying to bring into a shape more in unity with the ground immediately about my house - this takes some time, & is a pleasant trail of my few gifts that way.

Aug. 26. There I was obliged to lay my pen ^{down}, and could not resume it yesterday for any purpose, other calls preventing. But even at the risk of sending you a letter "of small value" - as the Vicar of Wakefield said of the occasional horse he lent to some far-away cousin - I will send this to you to-day. It will at least serve to ~~remind~~ assure you (I am not willing to really believe you need assuring) that we think of you often, & that our slack performances, letter-wise, are not to be taken as a measure of our good will. I was lately reading a notice of poor Prevost-Paras (the French Minister to U.S. who lately - & almost immediately after his arrival at Washington - committed suicide), in which the immense distaste for the pen he had acquired, owing to his being tied to it so many years as a journalist, &c.; was forcibly described. I have not that extreme feeling about the matter; but it has become ~~increasingly~~ ^{rather} ~~irksome~~ irksome to me to use a pen for almost any purpose. It always has been for Garrison, ever since I knew him; but I remember how strange I used to think it in him.

Last evng. we had the most of a rain which has fallen here for more than 2 months (nearer 3 I think-) a gentle rain, falling steadily for some three hours. It has changed the atmosphere & given it a new quality - a fine breeze is blowing & there is coolness & life in it. - I find other persons who have been affected by this extreme heat much as I have been, with a tendency to fever; - 2 of our strongest men here among them; & the illness among children, far & wide, is great. The persons you name are mostly well. Old Mr. Emerson - still blind, still patient, & a very great care to his daughter Mrs. Partridge, - is quite as well as when you were here, and is now living his 100th year, - having been 99 on the 25th July. He gave his vote for General Washington as President of the U. S. at his 2^d term of office - i.e. in 1792. Miss Partridge's health ("Ann Eliza") has been very poor indeed the year past. Some have thought her falling into a decline, by Consumption; but her physician now says it is asthma. The man of six wives died last winter, leaving the sixth to get into a great snarl about the property with the other heirs. Miss Bertody is pretty well & very bright - her mother pretty well, & other neighbours as usual. Both of my sons have been with us this summer occasionally - Edward indeed frequently, for a day or two at a time, & once for a week, - Russell, once, for ten days of his "vacation". They are both quite well.

A week ago last evng. my wife and I, - being in Boston together - went out to Cambridge, to John Edward May's house, particularly to see Rev. S. J. M. who had arrived there that morning. We found their only child (S. J. M. jr - 21 months old) quite ill, & the parents feeling very anxious; and in Wednesday's paper of this week alas! we saw mention of his death, & have since heard by letter. It is a terrible blow to the parents, who were much bound up in the child, and will be a hard trial to Mr. M. senior. I think it will be a comfort to them to have their father with them.

Have you heard of Henry C. Wright's death. It was very sudden - as sudden almost as if by a stroke of lightning. He was spending the summer with a friend in Pawtucket, N. Providence, - had made the recent acquaintance of a gentleman named Dorsey, of very congenial ways of thinking, &c. He went to that friend's store, to read to him a letter which he (H. C. W.) had just been writing to Wendell Phillips; & while there said he felt strangely & fell over in his seat. Mr. Dorsey supported him to another seat & summoned medical aid; but in a few minutes only his body remained here of H. C. Wright.

The funeral was largely attended, a week ago today, & Garrison, Phillips, & Senator Wilson spoke at it; - Garrison very fully. I have no doubt he will send you a paper containing Report of his remarks, which were very pronounced on several points. Did you

see Bourne Spooner, of Plymouth, while you were here?

He too has gone from us this summer, after a long confinement to the house, & at a good age - over 80. He was a delightful man, a great favorite, an easy & good talker, and was a man of excellent practical sense & business qualities as well as a brave & steadfast Abolitionist. Mr. Garrison and I attended his funeral on a fiercely hot day in July. There was a great throng present there too. What think you of Wendell

Phillips for Governor of Massachusetts? Not that there is much probability of it; but the "Prohibitionists" (Some of them) of the State had a large Convention in Boston last week, & nominated him for that office, which they said he would certainly accept. The "Labor-Reform" party will do the same shortly. Between them they will doubtless give him a large vote; but it will not amount to anything, I think. A good & able

Reformer, he has made very bad work of politics every time he has essayed to deal in them. The holding of office, himself, would be a very different thing from criticising others in office. Do you see the "Standard"? changed at first into a monthly, but very soon back again to a weekly, as is generally understood to give W.P. opportunity of more frequently conferring with the public. He has a super-serviceable follower in Aaron M. Powell, and W.P. has been using the new weekly, as I am told by Worcester people who see it, largely to stir up the political phases (if we can stir up a phase) of Temperance & Labor Reform, & with a special view, as these readers say, to the nomination which has come about; I found, at the time of the Cleveland Convention (1864) that W.P. had a great fondness for political nominations & machinery, and approved Gen. Cochrane for Vice Pres, because he was "popular" and "available". — Our Labor Reform party is one of follies & inconsistencies, and W.P. is stirring them up to measures wholly at variance with his earlier principles. Their leaders are nearly all a set of idle & noisy men & women, whose maxims are of the most selfish & monopolizing sort & undeserving of respect.

The War! it interests us intensely, — it absorbs us almost as much as our own did. I send you a late "Advertiser", that you may see how full it is of the war. Day by day, it gives us from 2 to 3 columns of Cable telegraphic intelligence, so that America knows, almost as soon as London & Dublin, what is transpiring. We constantly have the tidings, rumors, and news of the day before. The Democratic party here gives its sympathy to Napoleon & the French. Nobody else does. Not that we have any ill feeling to the French, whose nation has been friendly to us up to the time of our late War, — when Napoleon behaved worse to us, a great deal,

than the British Govt. did, meanly sending Maximilian
& French troops to Mexico, to be in readiness to interfere
against us, & help the Slaveholders' Rebellion, And
as the French people allowed it, & sustained the Emperor,
a feeling of indifference towards them has grown up. The
Americans generally desire the downfall of Napoleon, and
the utter overthrow of the Buonaparte family & influence;—
certainly the former. And as they believe the German
character far better, far truer & truster, far more sensible
& thoughtful, than the French, so they vastly prefer the
success of Germany ~ for the German people seem wonderfully
united in this resistance to Napoleon's infamous assault upon
them, in this contest. It amazes us to see how the
vaunted armies of France, under their most distinguished
generals, have been crowded back & constantly (thus far)
worsted & routed by the Prussian armies.

I will bear in mind what you say of your files of the
"Liberator" & "Standard", & will inquire of certain
libraries. Mrs. May wishes me to give her love
to you, and say she has written a great many letters to you
in her thoughts, & hopes to put one on paper soon. —

Last April I wrote to A. M. Powell to ask him
to account to me for ten copies of the Life of John Brown
which I had sent to him long before, as I wish'd to close my
acct. with you for that book. He replied that they were
"all accounted for to Mr. Webb, personally, while in this
"Country" — that he "made no memorandum of them"
and, "if his memory is at fault", you (R. D. W.) "will know".
He asked me to "advise with you", and if his recollection
not confirm'd by you, he desires me to write him again.
That was an irregular way of doing business; but if you
rec'd. the money for the books, or were otherwise satisfied,
shall make no objection. And now, farewell, for the present.
Yours, affectionately, I am, M. W.

I was greatly pleased with Deborah's two pieces, & thank you for them.